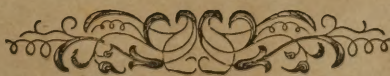


In Memory
of
Abraham Lincoln.

Hillard



IN MEMORY OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

A DISCOURSE

DELIVERED IN THE

First Congregational Unitarian Church

IN DETROIT, MICH.,

SUNDAY, APRIL 17th, 1865,

—BY—

A. G. HIBBARD, PASTOR OF THE CHURCH.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

DETROIT:

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1865.

DETROIT, April 17th, 1865.

REV. A. G. HIBBARD,

Dear Sir:—Having listened to your discourse yesterday morning, in memory of our late lamented President, and desirous of preserving the words you uttered for ourselves, and of circulating them among our friends, we would respectfully invite you to furnish us with a copy of the discourse for publication.

Very respectfully, your friends,

CHARLES MERRILL,	R. N. RICE,
J. WILEY,	E. G. ALLEN,
O. MACY,	A. W. RICE,
S. R. WOOLEY,	A. D. DICKINSON.

DETROIT, April 20th, 1865.

TO MESSRS. CHARLES MERRILL, R. N. RICE, J. WILEY, AND
OTHERS :

Your note of the 17th, inviting me to furnish for publication a copy of the discourse delivered Sunday morning, in memory of President LINCOLN, is before me, and while I regret that the discourse is so imperfect, I cheerfully comply with your kind request, and place the MS. at your disposal.

Yours respectfully,

A. G. HIBBARD.

"THE BEAUTY OF ISRAEL IS SLAIN UPON THY HIGH PLACES: HOW ARE THE MIGHTY FALLEN!"—II. *Samuel*, 1:19.

These are the words with which David commences his "lamentation over Saul, and over Jonathan, his son." The mournful event of yesterday explains the choice of my theme this morning. We have assembled to express our grief, and the sad and solemn drapery of mourning surrounds us. On an occasion like the present, I enter upon the performance of my duty with fear and trembling. With a few brief hours for preparation, with body and mind exhausted by a week of excitement and more than a thousand miles of travel, I might well distrust my ability to merit your approbation or justly to portray the character of that great and excellent man who deserves our eulogy as he receives our regret. But I frankly confess that I have no uneasiness on these accounts. I am to speak to friends and brothers always ready to receive kindly any words that I may utter and to suggest any excuse that the speaker may need. But I tremble when I think, that in this Christian land, in this nineteenth century, we are brought face to face with a crime, the very thought of which almost causes one's blood to curdle with horror, a crime committed under the most aggravating circumstances,—and, worst of all, a crime which will be rejoiced in by men and women who have called themselves, and are called by others, refined and Christian.

We had expected this morning around the communion table to celebrate the Lord's Supper, to think of the life, death and resurrection of our Lord and Redeemer. With joyous anthem

in memory of him who brought life and immortality to light, we had hoped to lift our hearts to the Father. But it is made to us a crucifixion-day, and we come with sad hearts to do reverence to him who was one of the world's Christs or Saviours, and whose spirit, we believe, looks down upon us from heaven.

It is befitting that in this solemn hour, when a nation's head is bowed with anguish and the sighs of afflicted millions are rolling up to heaven, that we should gird ourselves in the sable array of mourning, and pause for a moment and stand by the cold remains of him who was the greatest, best and wisest of our American statesmen, to consider his virtues, and mingle, over the dust of departed greatness, ours, with the tears of a nation.

There is something supremely solemn in the death of a great man, and when a national bereavement throws its dark shadows of disappointment upon the soul, and the chilling certainty that another harp whose tones have entranced thousands has been unstrung and hung upon the willows of death's cold river, a charm comes over us so holy and sacred that, spell-bound, we fain would sit in solemn silence, and call up before our spirit's eye visions of the mighty dead. But it is fitting that we should give vent to our feeling, and proclaim to the world our attachment to him who has fallen. It is fitting that we should chant a funeral requiem which shall be felt and remembered till *after* the funeral of this earth. We do not expect to add any new charm to the solemnity of the all-absorbing theme, but simply to offer our tribute of praise to his memory.

But can we realize that the man who has been almost the living embodiment of our government and nation for four years, is no more? Can we realize that the voice which has made the whole world echo and re-echo the tones of liberty is now hushed

forever, and upon that brow, where mercy seemed enthroned, the cold and icy death dew-drop now stands, the signet seal of death's victory? Can we realize that the man who has dared to make America free, by breaking the chains of millions of our fellow men, has passed beyond human censure and human praise? Can we realize that ABRAHAM LINCOLN, the illustrious statesman, the unflinching patriot, the immaculately honest politician—yes, our own venerated and beloved LINCOLN—is dead? Alas! it is even so. The man who has stood with us as a memento of the stormy past, a monument of those mighty minds who lived when patriotism meant *everything*, and who, amid storms that would have discouraged even Romans, launched our Ship of State and safely guided her through the foam-crested breakers into the ocean waters, has slept the sleep which knows no waking on earth. And in this is the peculiar sadness of the event: that it was not by the hand of natural disease, and while surrounded by loving friends, with zephyrs mingling with the soft melody of the groves, like the music of an unstrung Eolian harp, that he heard the shaft of death's dark angel, which watchful affection sought to turn aside, but like the sudden crash of the wrathful tornado, that breaks or uproots before one can bend, directed by vengeful hate, swiftly and surely sped the messenger of death from the weapon of the assassin whose heart was fired with the malice of a fiend.

“Aye, heaven and earth do cry, impossible,
The shuddering angels round the eternal throne,
Veiling themselves in glory, shriek, impossible,
But hell doth know it true.”

ABRAHAM LINCOLN has walked almost alone, like a lone star companionless, looming up through the darkness and mists of life's stormy sea, a cynosure of hope, a beacon light to his generation, yet as the sun radiates light to other parts of the

universe, and enlivens other intelligences, so his intellect and soul illuminated the path of many, who walked and lived only as it were in his influence ; and we hoped that for many years he might have been spared unto us, that we might have walked in the wisdom of his counsels and be guided in safety by his precepts. But this, like so many of the hopes of earth, has vanished, and this bright star has been thrust from its orbit and has passed away to darkle in the rayless night of death.

In contemplating the life of LINCOLN, it becomes us to lay aside all partisan spirit, all prejudice and bitterness, and consider him as an American ruler and statesman, twice elevated to the highest office in the gift of the nation.

I shall not speak of his faults, but bid you remember that *man* is not infallible, so *he* was not ; but we will not judge the dead. But I must say that what in passing ^{we} ~~has~~ seemed to us his chiefest faults, the retrospect has changed to glorious virtues, and candor has compelled us to say, "*he is wiser and purer than we all.*"

I sincerely believe that America never saw his superior as a statesman and ruler, and although in the course of his public life he has frequently been placed in the most trying circumstances, his wisdom and honesty have enabled him to rise superior to every emergency, and come off conqueror from every field of conflict. He was admired, revered and beloved by foreign diplomatists as never was President before him. His straightforwardness charmed all of these men who had been trained in a life-long school of cunning and deception. Said William H. Channing, Chaplain of Congress, at the Unitarian Convention, in New York, last week, "Every man in Washington has implicit confidence in the President." He has frequently been called "a diamond in the rough," but it seems to me

that his great mind was hewn from a gigantic block of intellect and was *polished and beautified* by the ennobling touch of honor and honesty, and so he was qualified to adapt himself to any circumstances in life and follow the interests of his country through all the intricacies and intrigues of diplomacy.

PRESIDENT LINCOLN assumed the reins of government at a period such as our country had never seen ; he found arrayed against himself a large party at the North and a united South ; he was compelled to prosecute a war with neither money nor munitions at command ; he had to meet a foe who, with all the appliances of civilization, waged a warfare as heartless and unrelenting as ever characterized heathenism. He has had to raise and equip armies, to educate generals, to sustain the nation's credit, to protect the national honor at home and abroad, to combat *armed* treason, and something meaner than that, a treason *too cowardly to bear arms*. He has been obliged to wait and watch when his friends have almost distrusted him. And he has lived through these four years to see the rebellion well nigh crushed, its capital deserted and in ashes, its president an exile, its commanding general an eager pleader for peace, its principal army disbanded, and Charleston, where the rebellion commenced, made the headquarters of the missionaries of freedom and peace. He has lived through these four years to see slavery, the cause of the war, forever abolished, to make his impress upon the Constitution of the United States, and to write his name by the side of Washington's as the *Saviour of his Country*. His was not the ambition of Alexander or Napoleon, who subserving every principle of justice and right, and even the happiness of mankind, to the accomplishment of their own ends, rode over ruin and prodigy, desolating nations and bathing their swords in the life-blood of thousands. His was not the

base avarice of Bacon, at once the wisest and meanest of mankind, who would barter justice for gold; but high, infinitely high he stood above that base and ignoble spirit of bribery and corruption which has blighted so many gifted men. He was a self-sacrificing man; he devoted all his talents to the cause of his country, and with untiring zeal sought to promote her welfare and make her what she professes to be, the freest nation on the earth. Party was a secondary consideration with him. His motto was: "First my country, then myself." His life, so pure and glorious, recalls the lines of Shakspeare, who has said a fitting word for almost every time and place.

This LINCOLN

"Hath borne his faculties so meek, hath been
So clear in his great office, that his virtues
Will plead like angels, trumpet-tongu'd, against
The deep damnation of his taking off"—

But his character as a citizen was always commendable, and in the capacities of husband, parent and friend, he shone still more conspicuously, if possible, than in any of the relations before mentioned, and in all his social and civil life he manifested that affable regard for the happiness and interests of his fellow men which endeared him to them, and built a monument of regard in their hearts which shall last longer than the proudest works of art. His name is embalmed in the souls of his countrymen, in the immortal part of each one of us, and so shall stand among the most lustrous on the pages of history.

As a *man*, ABRAHAM LINCOLN seems to have been naturally great, for even in his humble boyhood he won the confidence and the hearts of all who knew him. As a *patriot*, his sincerity has never been questioned, his sacrifices have been frequent, his firmness that of the rock which stands unmoved by the hurricanes which lash to fury the ocean. As *President*, the correct-

ness of his principles, the integrity of his life, the purity of his soul, have all made their impression on the nation, and his sense of justice has inscribed itself on the Constitution, which, perfected during his administration, will perpetuate his memory while it lasts. The Proclamation of Emancipation will stand in history with *Magna Charta* and the Declaration of Independence, and transmit his name to the latest generations. Always humane, he has had the strength to say to a conquered foe, *Live*. As a *friend*, he was chiefly beloved, winning men to him by his tender sympathies, by his joy-inspiring nature, and a heart free from hypocrisy, and transparent as the air we breathe. Elevated to the highest position in the nation, and sought after on account of the favors at his disposal, he had kind words and beaming smiles for all, and had the gift of denying so as to give no pain. But he was no courtier, no stickler for forms, and never deceived, as a glance at the deep, earnest eye ever attested, and now that he is gone, old friends of opposing parties join hands and weep over his remains in token of their love and honor. As a Friend, a President, a Patriot, a Man, he lived nobly and purely, and fell at last, like Jesus, our Teacher and Saviour, the victim of cowardly and treacherous vengeance.

Standing in this house of God to-day, I feel nothing like revenge towards the murderer of LINCOLN. Whoever he may be, wherever he may wander or be confined, may God have mercy upon him and comfort his sad heart and save his guilty soul. No one man has murdered our President. The hand that directed the deadly missile was nerved by many a heart at the North and South.

I charge the accursed institution of slavery, which incited this rebellion, which has demoralized politicians, which has debased the image of God, which always has encouraged lust

and murder, which has totally corrupted a party which in its inception was pure as light, which has filled the earth with groans and tears, with dishonesty and crime, and turned honest men to knaves, conspirators and assassins—I charge the system of American slavery with the murder of ABRAHAM LINCOLN. In the name of God, I charge the men who planned this unholy rebellion with the murder of ABRAHAM LINCOLN. I charge the men at the North, who have used their tongues and pens in justifying the South and upbraiding the government, with the murder of ABRAHAM LINCOLN. I accuse those men who have joined secret leagues against the government, who have called our President a tyrant, who have said that this war as prosecuted by the North was unjustifiable, with the murder of LINCOLN. I accuse you, who have preferred peace to principle, who have joined hands with traitors, who have secretly rejoiced at the rise in gold and at Federal reverses, who have said the North could never succeed, with the murder of ABRAHAM LINCOLN. You have murdered him, because you have helped to make a sentiment that would render such a consummation desirable. I charge you who have said within a week that you wished LINCOLN might be shot on account of his leniency to Lee's army, with the assassination of the President, for murder was in your heart when you uttered those words.

Before you, my brothers, and before God, I say, that to-day in the sight of heaven, and before many months shall have passed, those whom I have named will stand before the world his murderers. I would rather be the dead President to-day, with his record all glowing with light, liberty, honor and love, than the best of all those who have despised and dishonored him. The day will come, and that soon, when some living men will wish that they had *never* lived, for God lives, and justice

will be done. The days to come will unfold the present *as God sees it to-day*, and no name will stand higher, no character shine more lustrous, no record be purer, than that of him whose loss a nation mourns.

O, my friends, let us thank God in this sad hour for so good and pure a man, so patriotic and upright a ruler, as ABRAHAM LINCOLN. He will live while time endures and while eternity rolls on. Although this glorious Union should be dissolved, and the stars which stud the political heavens should one by one be blotted out, and their blazing fires be shrouded in Cimmerian darkness, yet so long as the human heart shall beat to the soul-stirring songs of Freedom and Liberty, so long his name shall be remembered. A Nation, passed through death to life, shall be his fitting monument. His memory shall be precious, his eternity joyous. When they lay the form, now so cold and silent, to rest, may the ocean anthems of the East and West be his funeral requiem, may the cool winds of the North chant their ~~orisons~~ ^{dirges} over his sleeping dust, and the soft breathing of Southern zephyrs, as beneath the pale light of the moon they gently whisper through the boughs of the dark-leaved magnolias, be his sleeping orisons. And never could epitaph be more appropriate than the familiar line, "An honest man's the noblest work of God."

Blessings on that wife so suddenly widowed, and those orphan children, come from God.

Blessings on our armies and navies, who have well nigh won the freedom and peace planned by our President, and which would have brought comfort and joy to his heart.

Blessings on our new President, and may God give him wisdom and strength, nerve his arm with justice, and fill his heart with mercy, and enable him to perfect the work so nobly begun, and of which we can now see the end.

Blessings on our stricken country. May peace soon dwell within her borders—a peace founded in righteousness. May partisan malice be hushed, and over the grave of our departed President may party bitterness be forgotten, while every truly loyal American devotes his energies and raises his prayers that our country, so long divided, may, united, become the freest country of the world.

God lives, and His spirit seems to say,

'Tis come,—his hour of martyrdom
In Freedom's sacred cause, is come;
And, though his life has passed away
Like lightning on a stormy day,
Yet shall his death hour leave a track
Of glory, permanent and bright,
To which the brave of after times,
The suffering brave, shall long look back
With proud regret, and by its light
Watch through the hours of slavery's night,
For vengeance on the oppressors' crimes.

